



EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement Track 4: EPSCoR Research Fellows (RII Track-4)

Informational Webinar

January 2018

**Timothy VanReken, Ph.D.
Program Director, NSF EPSCoR
tvanreke@nsf.gov
703-292-7378**

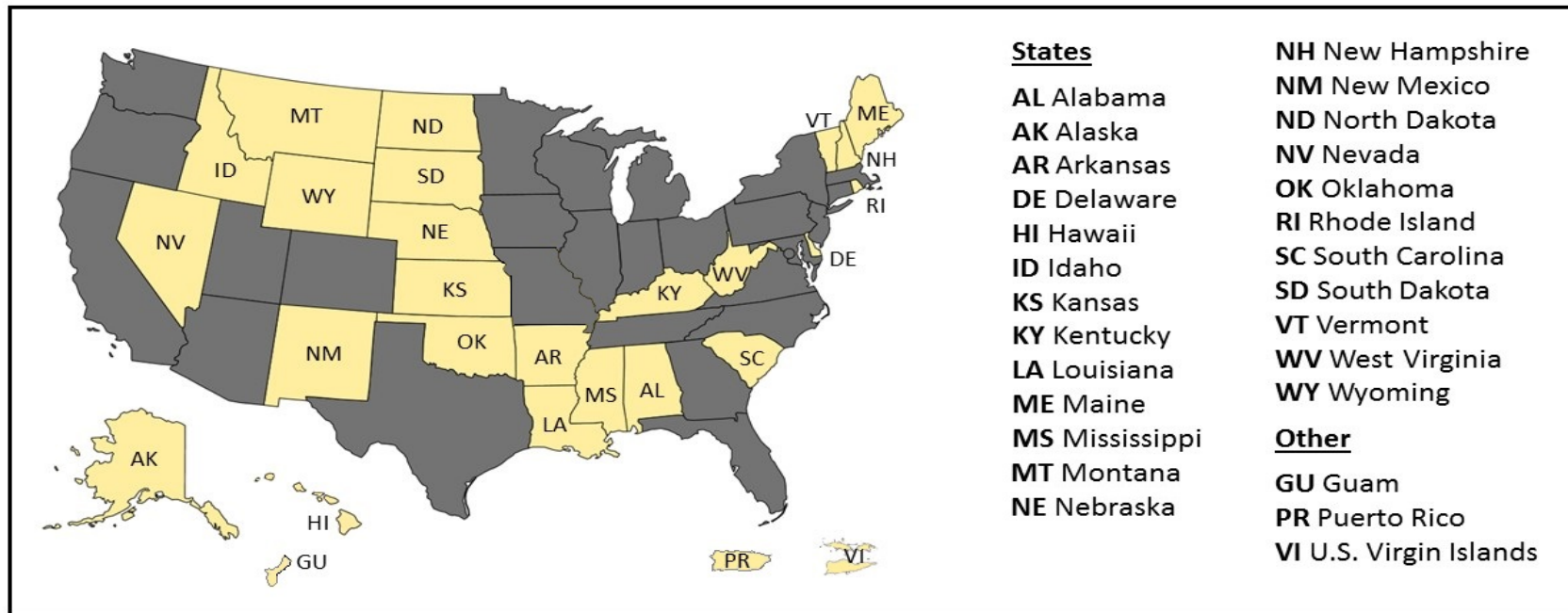
Webinar Purpose



- The goal for today is to inform the community about the recently released EPSCoR RII Track-4 EPSCoR Research Fellows solicitation.
- NSF 18-526 was released December 13, 2017
 - <https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2018/nsf18526/nsf18526.htm>
- Slides will be posted to NSF EPSCoR website following the webinars.

This webinar is NOT a substitute for reading the solicitation.

NSF EPSCoR FY17 RII Eligibility



EPSCoR states and other U.S. jurisdictions eligible for EPSCoR RII during FY 2017.

This includes twenty-four states, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

- States, Commonwealths, and Territories that receive $\leq 0.75\%$ of NSF research support funding averaged over most recent 3 years
- Eligibility table updated annually and publically available:

https://www.nsf.gov/od/oia/programs/epscor/Eligibility_Tables/FY2017_Eligibility.pdf

EPSCoR Strategic Goals



- Catalyze research capability across and among jurisdictions;
- Establish STEM professional development pathways;
- Broaden participation of diverse groups/institutions in STEM;
- Effect engagement in STEM at national and global levels; and
- Impact jurisdictional economic development.



**Discovery &
Innovation**



**Education &
Workforce**



**Economic
Development**

Building Capacity



Motivation for RII Track-4

- Majority of RII resources go toward large, center-like projects:
 - RII Track-1: Jurisdiction-wide awards, typically \$20M over 5 yrs.
 - RII Track-2: Collaborations across jurisdictions, \$4-6M over 4 yrs.
- Additional investments in individuals or small teams through co-funding mechanism.
- In discussion with our community, recognized opportunity to catalyze the career trajectories for a new generation of research leaders.
 - Time to develop new or extend current research directions.
 - Pathway to strengthen research connections with partners nationwide.



- Provides opportunities for non-tenured (or equivalent) investigators to further develop their individual research potential through extended collaborative visits to the nation's premier private, governmental, or academic research centers.
- Fellows will be able to learn new techniques, benefit from access to state-of-the-art equipment and facilities, strengthen collaborative partnerships, and/or shift their research toward transformative new directions.
- Experiences gained through fellowships are intended to provide benefits that will impact the recipient's career in years to come. These benefits to the Fellows are also expected to in turn enhance the research capacities of their institutions and jurisdictions.
- Any research topic that fits within NSF's overall portfolio will be considered for support.



Track-4 Eligibility

- PIs must have their primary appointment at an eligible institution:
 - Must be in an EPSCoR RII-eligible jurisdiction
 - Must be an Institution of Higher Education or a Not-for-Profit Non-Degree-Granting Organization
- At Institutions of Higher Education, PIs must hold a non-tenured faculty appointment:
 - Pre-tenure tenure-track position (typically Assistant Professors)
 - Long-term non-tenure-track position (most often Research Professors)
 - Persons holding transitional (< 3 years) fixed-term postdoctoral appointments are not eligible for this program.
 - Eligibility is determined by tenure status on proposal deadline date – March 13, 2018.
- At Not-for-Profit, Non-Degree-Granting Organizations:
 - Position must be an early-career career-track appointment
 - Independent research must be a major component of work duties
- Sole-PI proposals only; no co-PIs are allowed.
- **Hard limit of three proposal submissions per eligible institution**

Fellowship Details



- Fellowship provides support for the fellow to spend an extended period to conduct research at an identified host site.
 - Up to six months of salary support;
 - Travel between host site and home institution;
 - Living expenses at the host site (up to six months);
 - Multiple visits are okay, but total supported time may not exceed six months.
- Host sites may be any research institution within the United States or its territories/possessions.
 - University, Government, Corporate, Non-Profit facilities are all eligible;
 - Must identify a single host site;
 - Does not need to be in an EPSCoR jurisdiction;
 - Generally expected to be outside of PI's home jurisdiction and beyond easy commuting distance.

Fellowship Details (cont.)



- If needed, funds may also be requested to bring a trainee-level researcher along for the fellowship visit:
 - Typically a student or postdoc already working in the PI's group;
 - Salary support (up to six months; including benefits & tuition);
 - Travel between host site and home institution;
 - Living expenses at the host site (up to six months).
- Additional support will be allowed for the following direct costs associated with the work to be completed at the host site:
 - Up to \$10,000 (total) for lab fees, supplies, shipping equipment, publication costs, *etc.*
 - Up to \$5,000 (total) for other research-related travel
- NOT easily transferrable – If the PI takes a new position in a non-EPSCoR jurisdiction, the fellowship award will likely be terminated.



What Goes in the Proposal?

- Successful RII Track-4 proposals will present exciting, vibrant fellowship ideas that will positively impact and potentially transform the PI's individual career trajectory and more broadly impact his/her research field, institution, and jurisdiction.
- All proposals should include:
 - Motivation and context for the work to be conducted;
 - PI's specific plans for the fellowship period; and
 - Discussion for how the benefits gained from the fellowship would be sustained beyond the award;
 - Clear specifications of fellowship goals, performance metrics, and a timetable;
- Explain how/why the RII Track-4 award will advance the work – what specific opportunities will be made possible *via* the PI's extended visit(s) to the host site?
 - The parameters for the partnership should be clearly established.
- Describe how the activities will lead to long-lasting impacts for both the PI's career and the home institution/jurisdiction.
- **IMPORTANT:** This is not a two-year research project! The plan should focus primarily on the fellowship period and on any directly related activity before and after.

Solicitation-Specific Requirements



- Cover Sheet
 - Project title must begin with “RII Track-4:”, followed by a informative title in the topic area;
 - Proposal Type should be marked as “Research” (**not** “Fellowship”)
 - Primary Place of Performance should list the host institution for the fellowship visit.

- Project Summary
 - Must identify the proposed host site and primary research collaborator(s);
 - At the bottom, indicate the NSF Directorate, Division, and Program that most closely aligns with the proposal's research focus.

- Project Description
 - Strict 10-page limit.
 - Separate sections on Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts are required.



Budget Details

- Proposals may be for up to 24 months. Total funds requested may not exceed \$300,000.
 - Two-year duration is to provide flexibility in planning fellowship visit logistics; visits not expected to last that long.
 - Requested NSF support should be consistent with the project's proposed scope and activities.
 - Due to limits below, it is expected that most proposal budgets will fall below the overall award cap.
- Budgets may include up to 6 months of salary and fringe benefit support for the PI and one additional trainee-level participant.
 - Total is per person, **not** per year
 - Support may be for academic, calendar, or summer months.
 - Tuition for trainee may be included if appropriate.
 - **NO** Salary for any Host Site Personnel!!

Budget Details (cont.)



- Travel expenses (including living expenses) for the PI and trainee-level researcher. Up to \$75,000 total:
 - Up to \$20,000 for transportation expenses between the PI's home institution and the host site.
 - Multiple trips between the home and host sites are allowed.
 - Up to \$50,000 for living expense (Lodging, Meals, and Incidental Expenses) at the host site.
 - May not exceed the *per diem* rates set by the United States General Services Administration (GSA) for the host site location.
 - Where feasible, PIs are expected to budget for lodging arrangements in a manner consistent with extended visits.
 - Up to \$5,000 in additional travel expenses may be budgeted for research-related travel. (E.g., for conferences).
- Up to \$10,000 in additional direct costs are allowed.

Required Letters



At least one letter is required in each of these three categories:

1. From the appropriate supervisory administrator at the PI's home institution.
 - Should confirm the institution's support of the PI's plans and particularly should verify that the PI will receive release time from other academic duties to complete the project as proposed.
 - Should also confirm the PI's employment status at the home institution as it pertains to eligibility for the RII Track-4 competition.
2. From the identified primary research collaborator(s) at the host site.
 - Should confirm the collaborator's understanding of the goals of the fellowship and provide evidence to demonstrate that the PI will receive the support necessary to complete the proposed activities.

Required Letters (cont.)



3. From the appropriate administrative managers at the host institution.
 - Should confirm that all necessary logistical arrangements (site access, office space, cyber connectivity) to ensure that the project can proceed as proposed.
 - In the rare cases where the PI believes the primary research collaborator at the host site is also the appropriate administrative manager, the PI should contact NSF EPSCoR for guidance.

Additional Letters of Support from other parties may be submitted only if they are needed to verify specific tangible commitments related to activities described in the proposal. PIs will be required to remove letters that do not meet this standard.



- Intellectual Merit
- Broader Impacts
- Additional Criteria (Solicitation-Specific):
 - What evidence is presented to demonstrate that the proposed research outcomes can be achieved within the constraints of the fellowship period, with the work being performed primarily at the host site?
 - How will the fellowship have a positive impact on the trajectory of the PI's research career both during the period of the award and beyond?
 - How will the fellowship yield tangible benefits to the home institution and/or jurisdiction beyond the individual benefits to the PI?
 - What evidence is there that the home institution and the host site are each committing the necessary resources, both scientific and administrative, to lend confidence that the fellowship project will be successful in achieving its intended outcomes?



- **READ** EPSCoR's NSF 18-526 for detailed, accurate, specific, information:
 - <https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2018/nsf18526/nsf18526.htm>
- Full proposals due: March 13, 2018
- Institutional limit of three proposals
 - Many institutions are running internal competitions for these slots – check with them for details!
- Contact EPSCoR program officers if you have questions:
 - Tim VanReken, tvanreke@nsf.gov, (703) 292-7378
 - Chinonye “Chi-Chi” Nnakwe, cnnakwe@nsf.gov, (703) 292-8458
 - JD Swanson, jswanson@nsf.gov, (703) 292-2898



Thank you!

